
CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

A non-partisan policy board established in 1974 by the Governor and Legislature

FACING THE CHALLENGE OF THE CENTURY

Will California Renew Its Commitment to Keep College Opportunities Accessible, Affordable, and Effective?

Brief 97-1

The purpose of this policy brief

This is the first in a series of policy briefs that the Commission plans to issue in the coming months on the critical policy issues associated with one of the greatest challenges confronting the State and its colleges and universities: how will California accommodate the expected “Tidal Wave II” -- the children of the “baby boomer” generation -- of nearly one half million more students who will seek a college education over the next decade?

What are the dimensions of this challenge?

In its role as the State’s planning and coordinating agency for postsecondary education, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) estimates that by the year 2005, 455,000 more students -- a 25 percent increase over current enrollment -- will seek to enroll as undergraduate students at the California Community Colleges, the California State University, or at the University of California. If, and how, the State will accommodate these additional students is the fundamental issue confronting higher education and must be addressed by the State’s policy makers.

In its planning report, *The Challenge of The Century: Planning for Record Student Enrollment and Improved Outcomes in California Postsecondary Education*, and its companion facilities report, *A Capacity for Growth*, the CPEC concludes that even with strong spending discipline for health, welfare, and corrections programs, State General Fund revenues will barely provide sufficient resources to maintain current levels of public college enrollment. The Commission has concluded that unless new funding and instructional delivery strategies are identified to meet the expected student demand, college admission will be denied to significant numbers of qualified students seeking to enroll in our State’s public colleges and universities.

(Over)

When and where is this enrollment demand expected?

Approximately 338,000 students, or two-thirds of this expected enrollment surge, is expected to occur in the community colleges. Over half of this growth will occur between the years 2000 and 2005. The California State University is expected to encounter more than 85,000 new students seeking enrollment; the University of California over 32,000.

What are some of the issues that need to be examined in forming solutions to growth?

In *The Challenge of The Century*, CPEC identified a number of critical policy areas that need to be addressed and offered a series of recommendations. Several of those will be summarized in these issue briefs over the coming months. Among the areas you can expect to be included are:

- ♦ In what ways can technology enhance teaching and improve learning outcomes for students enrolled in public colleges and universities?
- ♦ What options exist for accommodating some portion of the expected increase in student demand in one of California's private or independent schools, colleges, or universities?
- ♦ In what ways can California's public educational institutions improve student learning while simultaneously facilitating students achieving their educational objectives more quickly?
- ♦ What student fee and financial aid policies can be put in place to insure broad access to quality postsecondary education and training opportunities?
- ♦ In what ways can technology assist in meeting the educational needs of Californians at a lower average cost than traditional methods of instruction?

What is CPEC's role in meeting this challenge?

The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) is the State's planning and coordinating agency for postsecondary education. CPEC is statutorily responsible for periodically updating the State's plan for postsecondary education as well as for reviewing and approving new campuses and off-campus centers. It is also responsible for identifying critical policy and budgetary issues for postsecondary education early enough for careful analyses and construction of appropriate responses to take place.

This issue is the first in a series based on CPEC's long-range planning document, *The Challenge of The Century*. Planning for new student enrollment and improving educational outcomes are primary statutory responsibilities of the Commission. In *The Challenge*, the Commission examines solutions and presents recommendations and strategies for providing postsecondary education and training opportunities most effectively and efficiently to increasing numbers of students. For more information on *The Challenge of The Century*, or this issue brief, contact Mary Saenz of the Commission's Governmental Relations Unit at 445-1910.